



# Navigating the UNFCCC Process as an Observer

# UNFCCC OBJECTIVE

The objective of the UNFCCC is to “**stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system**”.

In pursuit of this objective, the UNFCCC establishes a framework with:



Broad principles,



General obligation,



Basic institutional arrangements,



And an intergovernmental process for agreeing to specific actions over time (including through collective decisions by the Conference of the Parties, and as well as other international legal instruments with more specific obligations - such as the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement)



# WHAT ARE COPs?



The Conference of Parties (COP) is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements. A key task for the COP is to review the reports submitted by Parties on their GHG emissions and climate action.

## More Background on the COP

The COP meets every year, unless the Parties decide otherwise. The first COP meeting was held in Berlin, Germany in March, 1995. The COP meets in Bonn, the seat of the secretariat, unless a Party offers to host the session. Just as the COP Presidency rotates among the five recognized UN regions - that is, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Others - there is a tendency for the venue of the COP to also shift among these groups.



# OBSERVER ORGANIZATIONS

## UNFCCC PARTICIPANTS

UNFCCC Sessions are not open to the public. All participants must be duly accredited. There are three categories of participants at meetings and conferences in the UNFCCC process:

- Representatives of Parties to the Convention and Observer States,
- Representatives of observer organizations,
- Members of the press and media.

## OBSERVERS

Observer organizations are further categorized into three types:

- the United Nations System and its Specialized Agencies,
- intergovernmental organizations (IGOs),
- and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

IGOs and NGOs can register delegates once they have received observer status. Information on how to receive observer status can be found [here](#).

The different participants are reflected in the color of the badge:



# NGO CONSTITUENCIES

Of the three observer categories in the UNFCCC process, the majority of NGOs in the UNFCCC process are organized into constituencies, which are loose groups with broadly aligned interests. Each constituency is represented by a Constituency Focal Point (CFP), who facilitates communication between the NGOs and the UNFCCC secretariat. Contact details for CFPs can be found [here](#).

These constituencies correspond to the 9 Major Groups established in Agenda 21 and reaffirmed in the Rio+20 summit outcomes (A/RES/66/288 - "The Future We Want").

Business and Industry NGOs (BINGO)	Environmental NGOs (ENGO)	Farmers
Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs)	Local Government and Municipal Authorities (LGMA)	Research and Independent NGOs (RINGO)
Trade Union NGOs (TUNGO)	Women and gender Constituency (WGC)	Children and Youth NGOs (YOUNGO)



In addition to the nine NGO constituencies, the secretariat recognizes informal NGO groups. These groups, composed of admitted observer organizations, focus on specific themes not covered by the existing constituencies. They receive limited support from the secretariat during sessions:

- ♦ Faith-Based Organizations,
- ♦ Parliamentarians,
- ♦ Education and Communications NGOs.

The list of Focal Points is available [here](#).

# REGULAR CONFERENCE DAY

Grab a coffee and check the Daily Programme

8:00

9:00

If you are part of a constituency: Daily Constituencies meetings (1 hour)

Follow the negotiation meetings.

10:00

13:00

Negotiation meetings break for lunch between 13:00 - 15:00. Go check out various catering option.

Back to the negotiation meetings!

15:00

18:00

End of formal meetings: use side events and receptions for networking

Attend Side Events

Check the side events schedule [here](#) beforehand and select those that are more interesting to you.



# STAY UP TO DATE

## INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS:



- [Information for COP 30 participants \(A- Z\)](#)
- [Schedules and public webcast](#)
- [UNFCCC COP30 Page](#)



## DAILY PROGRAMME\*

- Official UNFCCC guide to each day's official meetings, events and press briefings.
- Provides an overview of the status of the previous day's negotiations and links to other conference related pages.
- In electronic form to reduce carbon footprint.
- Published each morning on the conference website.
- Consult the CCTV monitors for any last-minute changes and updates.

## DAILY READS

[TWN Climate change updates and briefing papers](#)



[Earth Negotiation Bulletin](#)



[ECO Newsletter](#)

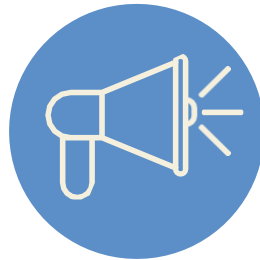


\*Forthcoming information can be found [here](#).

# WAYS TO ENGAGE

There are many ways for observers to engage during formal sessions of the UNFCCC:

Follow the **negotiations** to provide tailored substantive inputs to Parties, ensure transparency to the workings of a complex intergovernmental process, raise public awareness, and enhance public access to information.



**Showcase findings**, whereby observer organizations can network and disseminate research findings, lessons learnt from the implementation work on the ground and various messages and stories to a wide audience.

**Side events, exhibits, advocacy actions** are some of the avenues to showcase these. For further information, refer to pages 40 - 42.

Hold **bilateral meetings** with government delegates to share position papers and submissions, and advocate policy perspectives.

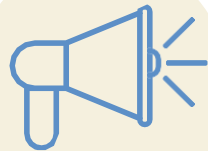


# WAYS TO ENGAGE



Develop **position papers** and make formal submissions in response to calls for information and views by negotiating bodies. Information on submissions is available [here](#).

**Townhalls** will provide space for preparing for dialogues and briefings and raising key issues and asking pertinent questions to the Presiding officers and the UNFCCC Executive Secretary. These Townhalls are usually chaired by one of the NGO constituency Focal Points. During the conference, information on such meetings will be published in the Daily Programme and on the CCTV screens.



At **press conferences**, observers can utilize the media's extensive reach to convey their views and advocate for change. This platform is instrumental in shaping public discourse and influencing climate policy on a global stage. More information on press conferences is available [here](#).



# WAYS TO ENGAGE

## Ways to engage through NGO Constituencies and Informal Groups:

- Attend **daily coordination meetings** of respective Constituencies. Information on such meetings will be published in the Daily Programme and on the CCTV screens.
- Make **joint constituency statements** in the plenaries addressing the conference with concise and impactful messages from a diversity of voices, channeled through constituencies. Statements may also be provided during **Contact Groups** or **Informal Consultations**, time and Parties permitting.
- Attend **townhall meetings** with NGO Constituencies and high-level representatives, such as COP President, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Subsidiary Body Chairs, and sometimes the High-level Climate Champions and UN Secretary General. These could be used to raise key issues and ask pertinent issues. Information on such meetings will be published in the Daily Programme\* and on the CCTV screens.
- **Nominate speakers/experts** to speak at UNFCCC mandated events/workshops.



# NEGOTIATION MEETINGS

## PLENARY

- ◆ Open to observers
- ◆ NGO Constituency statements, time permitting

## CONTACT GROUPS (CGs)

- ◆ Open to observers “unless at least one third of the Parties present at the session of the Convention body setting up that contact group object and on the understanding that the presiding officers of such contact groups may determine at any time during their proceedings that they should be closed” (Decision 18/CP. 4).
- ◆ NGO Constituency statements, time permitting

## INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS (ICs)

- ◆ If established by CG: closed but encouraged to remain open
- ◆ If established by Plenary: “at least first and the last meetings of the informals may be open”, “recognizing the right of Parties to keep informal meetings closed” (I conclusion FCCC/I/2011/7, para 167).
- ◆ NGO Constituency statements “if time and Parties allow”

## INFORMALS INFORMALS (INF INFS)

- ◆ Including drafting groups/spin off groups/Friends of the Chair
- ◆ Not open to observers



# ACCESS TO MEETINGS

## FORMALITY OF MEETINGS:

The chart below provides a breakdown of types of meetings and documents.

## ACCESS TO OBSERVERS:

- Open: O
- Closed: X

Observers will have priority to rooms over Party overflow, unless the Party overflow are accompanied by a Party member. In the event that Parties fill room capacity, nine seats (one per NGO Constituency) will be reserved.

Open meetings are limited by capacity. Closed meetings can be opened and open meetings can be closed should Parties decide to do so during the meetings.

Timeline 

<b>Meeting Type</b>	O Opening Plenary	O Contact Groups (CG)	O/X Informal Consultations	X Informal Informals	O CG Conclusions	O Closing Plenary
<b>Documents to consult</b>	Pre-sessional documents	Pre-sessional documents/ Deliberations/ Draft text	Deliberations/ Draft text	Draft text	L Documents	Adoption of L documents



# MEETING ROOMS AND SEATING ARRANGEMENTS PROTOCOL

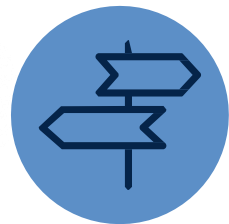
## Implications of the Party-driven nature of the UNFCCC process in terms of meeting rooms:



If the room is full, Party representatives have the priority, and the secretariat consults the co-facilitators to try and arrange for some representation of observers. For example, this has been conducted through a ticketing process with NGO Constituencies.



When negotiations or Party meetings and NGO meetings are booked back-to-back, and the former runs over time, NGO meeting organizers are kindly requested to contact Meeting Room Assignment (MRA) counter and not disturb the negotiations or Party meetings directly. The MRA team will provide support.



In the event that the meeting room you have booked is required for urgent negotiation meetings at short notice, you may be provided with an alternative solution.



# MEETING ROOMS AND SEATING ARRANGEMENTS PROTOCOL

## Implications of the Party-driven nature of the UNFCCC process in terms of seating arrangements:



Party representatives must be able to sit at the table.



Default: Observers are to sit in the back rows. When you are allowed to speak, please find a seat with a mic that is free.



Occasional exceptions, depending on the co-facilitators and on the nature of the agenda items requiring observer inputs: observers might be invited to sit at the table after all Parties have taken their seats.



# ENGAGING BEYOND COP

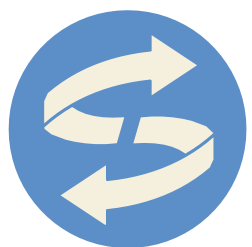
There are many ways to engage in UNFCCC processes after COP 30:



Make written submissions on agenda items where Parties have requested observer inputs. You can find the submission portal [here](#).



Follow the meetings of the Constituted Bodies for in-depth discussions and understanding Parties' positions on the issues at hand.



Prepare concrete textual bridging proposals that reflect the on-going discussions and help resolve the difficulties. Share them with Parties during your bilateral meetings.



Join voices together with other groups rather than working in isolation.



# SIDE EVENTS AND EXHIBITS



Organized by observer organizations, Parties partnering with observers, [side events and exhibits](#) are popular modes of observer engagement at COPs.

At COP30, over 330 joint side events and 100 exhibits are selected from over 1,400 side event and over 350 exhibit applications respectively, particularly those proposals by developing country observers.

They will cover the following issues:

1. Mitigation, including response measures
2. Adaptation, including loss and damage
3. Means of implementation and support
4. Integrated and holistic approaches
5. Other unique perspectives related to UNFCCC

Is your organization involved in organizing a side event or an exhibit?

Check the [home page of SEORS](#) for the most up-to-date logistical information.

## Did you know?

The SBI recognized side events as an **essential part of the UNFCCC process** and an important tool for engaging observers in knowledge-sharing, networking and the exploring of actionable options for meeting the climate challenge. (FCCC/SBI/2014/8, paragraph 224).



Source: UNFCCC secretariat



Source: UNFCCC secretariat

# SIDE EVENTS AND EXHIBITS

Side events and exhibits will be running every day (except Sunday, 16 November, the rest day!) from **Monday, 10 November** to **Thursday, 20 November**.

To avoid thematic clashes, most of the **side events** falling under the topics of the COP 30 Presidency thematic days, are **not** allocated on those days. Instead, they are grouped into "thematic clusters" and are assigned slots **on the days prior to the thematic day** and/or **on the days after the thematic day**.

[COP 30 Side Events schedule](#)

[How to attend COP 30 side events](#)

[COP 30 Exhibits schedule](#)

[How to attend COP 30 exhibits](#)

Date	Monday, 10 November	Tuesday, 11 November	Wednesday, 12 November	Thursday, 13 November	Friday, 14 November	Saturday, 15 November
COP 30 thematic days	Adaptation, Cities, Infrastructure, Water, Waste, Local governments, Bioeconomy, Circular economy, Tourism		Health, Jobs, Education, Culture, Justice and Human rights, Information integrity, Global ethical stocktake, Workers		Energy, Industry, Transport, Trade, Finance, Carbon markets, Non-CO2 gases	

Date	Monday, 17 November	Tuesday, 18 November	Wednesday, 19 November	Thursday, 20 November
COP 30 thematic days	Forests, Ocean, Biodiversity, Small and medium entrepreneurs, Indigenous peoples, Local and traditional communities, Children and youth		Agriculture, Food systems and food security, Fisheries, Family farming, Women and Girls Gender Afrodescendants, Science and technology, Artificial intelligence	



# We wish you a productive conference!

For more information please visit the [Non-Party Stakeholder web pages](#) or contact us at [cool@unfccc.int](mailto:cool@unfccc.int)



UN Climate Change website  
[Our official website](#). You can find documents, calendar of events, news and resources here.



X (previously Twitter)  
[@UNFCCC\\_](#)  
[@simonstiell](#)



Instagram  
[@unclimatechange\\_](#)



LinkedIn  
[UN Climate Change](#)  
[Simon Stiehl](#)



TikTok  
[UN Climate Change](#)



UN Climate Change App  
This app will give you quick access to information about the UN Climate Change process and associated events.



Apple phones



Android phones